224 But the Mundurucu are cultivators and hunters. Their crude
221 husbandry cannot provide them with plentiful resources. And hunting, even on those plains that teem with game, could never supply with regularity a large population center. As game becomes less abundant, the hunters are forced to wander ever farther to find it.

The need and taste for hunting, instead of bringing men together, tends on the contrary to isolate them increasingly, for isolation is the only means of avoiding competition in this sport upon which their very existence actually depends.

No other motive is to be sought for the dispersal of Mundurucu families during the summer months. As already mentioned above, I came upon some of those families in the course of my travels, living in huts in the midst of the woods or on the banks of the Cadereri.

361 In spite of everything, however, the tribe remains strongly
621 united although divided into twenty villages.
619 It is true that the villages own allegiance to no central government, either civil or religious; but the moral bonds which hold together all the villages and all the individual members of the tribe are so strong that they have withstood all divisive influences through the long history of the tribe. [113]

● 585 Among the Mundurucu, marriage consists of a simple agreement between the marriage partners and their families, and is not invested with any religious character or formulas.

584 Sometimes a Mundurucu is betrothed to a young girl through an agreement with her family, and thenceforth treats her as his future wife, supplying her with game and other means of subsistence until she reaches puberty and the marriage is consummated.

From the moment of the agreement, the betrothed girl is respected by all as such, and no one dares dispute her with the man destined to become her husband.

[595] The marriage, once celebrated, constitutes a strong bond between the spouses. Polygamy is not practiced in this tribe, and scenes of jealousy are not infrequent.

562 The village women, though overburdened with work, are treated with a certain regard; they are not even permitted to enter the ekcá or warriors' quarters.

000 the village. The children were reared in a stable group
855 that provided a large degree of emotional and economic security. The Mundurucú were and are devoted parents, and there was great affection between parents and children. However, the sudden death of both parents would have caused no great change in the social and economic life of the child.

Marriage

584 Marriages were sometimes arranged for the children by the parents when the children were still very young. Most of these arrangements were made between brothers and sisters for their children and were within the pattern of intermoiety, cross-cousin marriage. The parents of either the boy or girl could take the initiative. In many cases, a young man who had developed a desire for a girl either asked her father and mother for her directly or used the intermediary of his own parents or older relatives. There was no gift exchange or bride price or service involved. If
585 the match was found suitable by both families, the young man
591 merely moved to the girl's village and took up residence in the men's house there. If he married a girl of his own village, as was often the case, he merely changed his household affiliation. He had socially recognized sexual rights to her and became a part of the economy of her household.
[836] In most cases, the man and woman had entered into sexual relations with each other before the marriage. If the young man had lived in the same village as his wife, the social recognition of the bond caused little change in the life of the couple or their families. The man began to bring

585 his game to the house of his bride and the products of h
591 garden went to the new household. He didn't even have t
596 move his hammock. Marriage was unstable especially in t
early years before children were born to the couple. However, separation frequently occurred even between couple with two or three children. In these cases, the man went back to his old village or house affiliation and the children stayed with the mother. The commonest causes of marital breakup were laziness or infidelity on the part of the wife, in which case the husband might simply gather his hammock, weapons, and personal belongings together and leave. The same reasons on the part of the husband might cause the girl's family to turn the husband out of the household. Her relative lack of mobility made it difficult for the female to take the initiative in these cases.

695 Polygamy was not commonly practiced among the Mundurucú and the number of wives in such unions never exceeded two. It was generally confined to the chief of the [622] village since the chief and his sons were exempt from the rules of matrilocality. The sons of the chief remained members of the father's household and their brides were incorporated into it. Usually the second wife was taken at some considerable time after the first marriage and often only when the first wife grew too old to fulfill her economic functions. A situation akin to polygamy often existed when a man took a new wife before taking his leave of the old one. These episodes were usually stormy. There was frequently bitter hostility between the two wives if they shared

6: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953)1956
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in each village, and informants say that villages of four or five houses were 621
common in the last century.

The men's house was of square floor plan, but had an unusual silhouette. 344
Although a semipermanent structure, it was built in the form of a huge lean-
to, open on three sides. At the southwest corner was a small, completely en-
closed chamber which housed the sacred trumpets. Running from back to
front of the men's house at an elevation of five feet above the ground were
three long, horizontal poles. One pole ran down the middle and the other two
were on the outer edges of the structure. From these poles the men hung their
hammocks in two separate rows. The men of Red moiety slept in the south row,
and the men of White moiety occupied the north row.

The Mundurucú men's house was unlike most such institutions in the de- 344
gree to which it divided the everyday life of the men from that of the women. 621
Here the division was complete. The men neither ate, slept, worked nor relaxed
with their women. Every male, from the age at which his tattooing was com-
pleted and he became a full-fledged warrior, slept in the men's house. His bows
and arrows were kept in the thatch above his hammock. The hammock arrange-
ment followed moiety lines in the north-south separation of the hammock rows,
and clan comembers slept adjacent to each other. They, in turn, were adjoined
by members of other clans of the same phratry. Due to the fragmentation
caused by matrilocal residence, several clans were represented in most men's
houses. The contemporary village of Cabruá, for example, has a population
of only seventy, but men of ten different clans were present.

When a Mundurucú married, there was no ceremony of any sort, and a 585
minimum of formalities were observed. The young man or his parents went to
the girl's parents and requested her hand. The request was usually granted ex-
cept when the young man was for some reason undesirable to the girl's family.
Prearranged marriages were common and were often the means by which cross-
cousins were united. The actual event of marriage was little more than a public
recognition of the alliance. The bridegroom moved to the wife's village and
took up residence in the men's house there. He brought his daily kill of game
to his bride's house, and his exclusive sexual rights to the girl were recognized.

In most other respects he had remarkably loose bonds with the household 264
of his wife's family. He frequently went there for a between-meal snack or to 592
play with the children. However, the large meals which he ate before and after
the day's hunt at morning and at nightfall were taken in the company of the
other men immediately outside of the men's house. The women of each house-
hold prepared an equal part of the food consumed there, and all of the men
squatted around the common pots to eat. The separation of men and women
was made complete by the fact that male craftwork, such as the manufacture of
arms and baskets, was done in the men's house, and the men whiled away their
idle hours there.

Even when it involved a move to a new village, matrilocality imposed no 592
great burden on the men. They did not shift from one dwelling or household to
another, but from one men's house to another. The internal arrangement of

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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often wanders from village to village, hanging his ham- 584
mock in the men's houses and acquainting himself with available girls. If one meets his fancy, he generally enters into a casual liaison with her and then asks her father and mother for permission to marry. If they consider him to be a serious person and a good worker, permission is usually granted. The young man does not always represent himself but frequently returns home to ask his father to speak in his behalf. Marriages are occasionally contracted for the children by the parents; this practice is less common than it was in the past, as the decreased importance of the extended family has made marriage increasingly an individual affair rather than a bond between kin groups.

No special observances of either a ceremonial or an eco- 585
nomic nature precede the marriage. If the young man was a resident of another village, he comes to the bride's village bearing his hammock, arms and personal possessions and installs himself in the men's house. If he is from the same village as the bride, which is less frequently the case, he makes no change at all in his living arrangements. The groom merely brings fish and game to his bride, and not to the house of his mother. The provision of the wife with food is the central symbolic act in marriage. Both my- 586
thology and real life abound with cases in which the young man who is determined to leave his wife, openly and deliberately refuses to give her his day's kill; this effectively constitutes divorce.

Mundurucú marriages become consolidated by time and 581
children. Couples who have been married several years commonly show great devotion to each other. But the union tends to be brittle in its early period. The membership of the husband and wife in the men's house and the dwelling house, respectively, and the patterns of collectivism in consumption give the couple a degree of economic in-

village was not over-watchful and jealous of the chief's family and would be quick to resist, however passively, what they considered to be high-handedness. Biboi, however, did not have the surrounding group of relatives that may have given some minimal support to his claim to leadership. Rather, he depended upon the trader and his father and relatives in Cabututú to buttress his position. 622 584

Given his delicate status, Biboi proceeded to vacate it through a misinterpretation of the chieftaincy. He had listened to his father's nostalgic tales of the role of the chief in times past, and one might say that he had some knowledge, in a merely cognitive sense, of the traditional culture. It is highly dubious, however, that Biboi had internalized sufficient culture to make him an effective actor within the system of social relationships. Biboi knew that "in the old days, chiefs were powerful men who directed their people and brought goods for them." This view of the past may or may not have been true, but it surely did not apply to the present. Biboi, nonetheless, announced at large that he was eminently qualified to be chief, as only he knew how to deal with the trader and only he had the force to tell the people how, when and where to work. I was a special recipient of this information, for Biboi found it most important to gain stature in the eyes of a prestigeful outsider. But Biboi also told all the others of his importance, and the people of Cabitutú stated that he indeed relayed the demands of the trader in forceful terms. His "followers" saw him solely as an agent of the trader in their village, and they were certain that his only function was to promote their exploitation and defraudment. Their analysis was correct, but I doubt that Biboi thought his role to be at all asocial. There is no evidence to substantiate this, for only he could tell me whether he was aware of the machinations of the trader, and he did not. But I believe that Biboi saw the trader as a father figure, many of whose values he had internalized and subscribed to as legitimate. And he also saw himself to be in the position of a strong and traditional leader. [57] [578]

Biboi had learned something else about the chiefs of times past, and this was the fact that many were polygynous. Polygyny was possible only for chiefs, for the matrilocality that applied to most of the population made it most difficult to have plural wives unless they were sisters. Even for a chief, however, polygyny was a difficult and stormy relationship, and it was evidently never of very great frequency.

Biboi did not have the implicit and unconscious ability to understand the fine points of Mundurucú social structure that a man raised in a village would have, and he made some of his most serious blunders in marriage. Soon after assuming the chieftaincy of Cabitutú, he married a woman of the village, a widow several years older than himself who, through the situational variability of post-marital residence, had a strong nucleus of kin in the village. Though I have no data upon which to make a firmer statement, it is quite probable that he married the woman--frankly a crone--in order to enlist the sympathies of her relatives. But Biboi was a young, handsome and virile man, and he subsequently sought a wife more to his liking. He located a pretty girl of about sixteen years in the village of Decodyen and brought her home to Cabitutú. This enraged the first wife, who berated Biboi, assaulted the girl and complained to her brothers. The latter expressed their disapproval of the polygynous union to Biboi, and the rest of the village supported them. Biboi's general behavior and his exercise of his "chieftaincy" had already outraged them, and this [585] 575 578